

liberty, with the right to acquire and possess property of every kind," as well as the right "to transact private business without the interference of government," and the right of an individual "to carry on his own occupation, to secure the fruits of his own industry." Slavery is, of course, the ultimate denial of economic freedom—a fact so obvious it would not bear repeating in any day but the present.

The New Orleans butchers who challenged the slaughterhouse law, Bolick notes, were defending their livelihoods, attempting to protect their right to compete against the state's power to restrain them. In upholding the law, the Court ruled that the states are not bound by federal protection of the privileges or immunities of their citizens.

The ruling was obviously contrary to the intent of the 14th Amendment. As Justice Joseph Field wrote in dissent, "If this inhibition has no reference to privileges and immunities of this character...it was a vain and idle enactment, which accomplished nothing, and most unnecessarily excited Congress and the people on its passage. With privileges and immunities thus designated no State could ever have interfered by its laws, and no new constitutional provision was required to inhibit such interference....But if the Amendment refers to the natural and inalienable rights which belong to all citizens, the inhibition has a profound significance and consequence."

As a result of *Slaughter-House*, Bolick declares, "What was designed as a mighty bulwark to shield individuals against government oppression, has been utterly emasculated by judicial neglect, at great cost to all Americans but particularly to those outside the economic mainstream."

Bolick argues that a new civil rights agenda must aim ultimately to reverse *Slaughter-House*, to restore the basic liberties covered by the Privileges or Immunities Clause. A reversal "would mean far greater security for the forgotten civil rights—primarily economic liberty, which has singularly lacked judicial protection, but also all manner of private property rights, liberty of contract, and

other incidents of personal autonomy," he says. "The general sphere of natural rights envisioned by the framers of the Fourteenth Amendment would...provide a new bulwark for protecting individual liberty against the state."

Trying to overturn *Slaughter-House* may seem a quixotic aim more than a century after the ruling. Yet Bolick recalls that the NAACP also seemed to be tilting at windmills when it set out on its 50-year effort to topple *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Moreover, Bolick is not alone. He joins a number of constitutional scholars who, along with such thinkers as William B. Allen, Thomas Sowell, and Charles Murray, are laying the necessary intellectual

foundation for a revival of the principles of the Founding and classical liberalism.

Bolick notes that "the remarkable successes of left-wing advocacy organizations" show that law "can be a mighty tool...a powerful weapon in the arsenal of liberty." It is now time "for the defenders of freedom to take to the courtrooms and join the battle on our terms." A manifesto of penetrating reason, passion, and practicality, *Unfinished Business* is essential reading for anyone who has searched in vain for a useful and principled civil rights strategy that supports individual opportunity against group-entitlement dogma.

Carolyn Lochhead is a writer at Insight.

I.O.U.S.?

BY DOUG BANDOW

Gratitude: Reflections on What We Owe to Our Country, by William F. Buckley, Jr.
New York: Random House, 192 pages, \$16.95

Led by the usual suspects, advocates of national service have been extraordinarily active during the last two years. In 1988, Charles Moskos of Northwestern University wrote a book, *A Call to Civic Service*, detailing a new, voluntary plan to replace his earlier, mandatory proposals. The persistent Donald Eberly has co-edited a new book with Michael Sherraden, *The Moral Equivalent of War?*, reviewing other countries' national service programs and calling for a voluntary U.S. program open to all adults.

And a bevy of conservative Democrats, such as Sens. Charles Robb of Virginia, Sam Nunn of Georgia, and Rep. David McCurdy of Oklahoma, introduced a Moskos-inspired proposal for a multibillion-dollar effort. A number of their colleagues came up with other ways to spend millions or billions of dollars on conservation corps, demonstration projects, and the like. Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona pushed the only mandatory plan of the lot, receiving substantial silent support.

Before adjourning in October, Con-

gress approved a three-year, \$187-million Christmas-tree bill that will spend a little money on each strategy and ensure that everyone will be back pushing for more cash next time. But the real social engineers—Moskos and his lawmaking friends—were disappointed, since all their efforts had led to was the usual passel of pork. They remain genuinely committed to a Plan, a Program, one that they believe will really Make a Difference.

And so, too, it seems, is William F. Buckley, Jr.

Buckley, the founder of *National Review*, has a libertarian streak; he supports legalization of drugs, for instance. But he is a patrician rather than a populist and therefore retains a sense a noblesse oblige. And that means every one should serve.

Indeed, this is not a new idea for Buckley. In 1973 he included it in his book *Four Reforms*, but his program then was entirely private and voluntary, "enforced" by the top 10 private colleges, which would consider only those applicants who had performed a year of national service. Alas, he complains, "the private sector has not shown itself dis-

posed to take action to launch national service."

Yes, he acknowledges, there has been support for individual volunteer projects. But "voluntary social action hasn't sufficed." So "enter the state, with its large inventory of sanctions." And thus the new Buckley program, which, though not formally compulsory, would combine financial rewards with withdrawal of subsidies like educational loans as well as such "privileges" as a driver's license and perhaps the right to obtain a high school diploma.

What makes *Gratitude* a challenge is the author and not the book, a thin volume relying heavily on the writings of others, particularly Moskos's *A Call to Civic Service* and Richard Danzig and Peter Szanton's *National Service: What Would it Mean?* Although one can joke abstractly about there being so little difference between conservatives and liberals, one still does not naturally think of William F. Buckley joining Margaret Mead, William James, Harry Truman, and Robert McNamara in pushing perhaps the hoariest of collectivist nostrums.

Buckley's argument is a simple one. We all owe something to our country. He explains: "We are accustomed to hearing it said that criminals ought to repay their 'debt' to society. The term of obligation is used too narrowly. Those who do not murder, rape, or steal also owe a debt to their society, if only because it pauses to distinguish between those who rape, murder, and steal and those who do not. Call it, broadly, a debt to civilization; more distinctly, a debt to the 'fatherland'—the nation-state into which we were born, or to which we repaired."

Unfortunately, Buckley is confusing "gratitude," the title of his book, with obligation. We ought to be grateful that we live in a society that distinguishes between those who murder and those who don't. But the fact that it makes those distinctions does not mean we are in its debt, that we are somehow receiving undeserved benefits. To the contrary, people are all "endowed by their creator," in the words of the Declaration of Independence, with "certain unalienable

rights," including "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The very purpose of government is to secure these rights. Thus, we should be grateful when it acts to fulfill its responsibilities. But we do not owe it a year of our lives because it has done so.

Of course, many of us believe that we have a moral responsibility to help others who are less fortunate. But even that is not payment of a debt, but rather a voluntary expression of God's love, for instance. It certainly is not something owed to the state. Nevertheless, Buckley argues that national service would strengthen the "connections between the individual and

**Buckley's argument
is a simple one.
We all owe some-
thing to our country.
Unfortunately, Buckley
is confusing "gratitude"
with obligation to
the state.**

the community beyond those that relate either to the state or to the marketplace."

Buckley echoes the left when he implies that believers in individual liberty think the world starts and stops at the marketplace. Rather, they support a free society in which people may—and, in fact, do—interact with each other for noneconomic as well as economic reasons. The idea of the marketplace is not that everything must be a pure financial transaction equating marginal cost and marginal benefit, but that everyone is free to pursue his economic *and any other* interest. Indeed, widespread voluntarism today helps strengthen the connection between individual and community about which Buckley is worried.

But Buckley believes that personal choice has not worked, and he wants to "shape the national ethos." Encouraging people to be more humane, giving, and compassionate is certainly a laudable

goal. Will national service reshape attitudes in this way, however? Given the widespread cynicism toward politics today, one has to wonder about the effect of a system whereby leaders in Washington continued to live a life of privilege while demanding that young people prove their right to be called, in Buckley's words, "Citizen, First Class."

Still, Buckley argues that the experience of helping others, even if not entirely voluntary, would ennoble the participants. "Republican citizenship incites every man to be a knight," he writes. The benefits of working with the elderly or elementary students or whomever will transform individual lives. And, incidentally, such service will fulfill all sorts of important social needs, resting "on the proposition that there is surplus human energy—i.e., energy not needed for subsistence—that ought to be channeled to social needs whose spokesmen cannot successfully plead their case in the marketplace."

Alas, Buckley's aggregation of a mass of different individual experiences into one mass experience is deeply flawed. First, he relies on essentially meaningless estimates of millions of important tasks that need to be done. The health-care field could use 715,500 people, he writes. Actually, it could use 1.4 million, or 2.1 million, or as many people as nursing homes and hospitals could fit in their hallways, since there is always something to be done if the price is low enough. There's simply no way to know how many of these tasks are worth doing without relying on prices to allocate scarce resources; hence the marketplace test.

Second, not all jobs are equal in their benefit, either to the participant or to society. Working in a museum will not provide the same sort of emotional experience as working with AIDS patients. Filling out police paperwork is unlikely to be as ennobling as helping with the home care of someone who has Alzheimer's disease. Voluntarism works today precisely because it is both voluntary and decentralized, with individuals and organizations trying to fill the jobs that are most worthwhile to both participants and the less fortunate. To create a national program to transform a few of

the people who currently lack much charitable impulse is as dubious a scheme of social engineering as conjured up by anyone on the left.

Buckley says he has detected only "two sea changes in national attitudes" during his lifetime—environmentalism and racial tolerance. He hopes his national service program would promote a third. Yet even without implementation of his plan, the 1980s have seen a dramatic increase in voluntarism, including efforts by the much-maligned yuppies, who have

been searching for meaning in their lives beyond fat bank accounts. And those of us who believe in service can not only encourage these trends through books like *Gratitude*—and Buckley's plea in this regard is a powerful one—but also lead by example.

Contributing Editor Doug Bandow is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute and the author of The Politics of Plunder: Misgovernment in Washington (Transaction Books).

The Elusive Dragon

BY ROSS H. MUNRO

China Misperceived: American Illusions and Chinese Reality, by Steven W. Mosher
New York: Basic Books, 260 pages, \$19.95

Among the growing number of foreigners visiting Beijing in the mid-1970s were many Americans whose politics back home would have been labeled mainstream or even conservative. Yet almost invariably these Americans were enthralled by what they saw during their carefully packaged tours of the People's Republic of China. By contrast, European social democrats who had seen the very same factories, communes, and schools regularly voiced deep skepticism about the new China.

Nearly all Americans then seemed captives of the prevailing myth: that the Chinese Communists had created an orderly society that equitably provided sufficient food, shelter, and clothing at a price that, while too high by Western standards, was one the Chinese people were happy to pay after decades of disorder and deprivation. That myth had in turn replaced the prevailing U.S. myth of the 1950s: that China was a totalitarian nation where the mindless masses were collectively building a mighty industrial state and a superpower that would soon threaten the United States.

Although others are not immune, Americans have long been particularly prone to adopting popular perceptions of an alternately good and bad China.



Steven W. Mosher: Revealing the paradigms behind the China myth.

Steven Mosher describes how successive paradigms created by U.S. sinologists and China-hand journalists have for many decades given Americans a profoundly distorted picture of what is happening in the world's largest nation.

Mosher's survey takes us from the caves of Yen-an in the 1930s and 1940s—when American journalists pampered by Zhou Enlai and charmed by Mao Zedong sent back dispatches portraying the communist guerrillas as agrarian reformers—to the aftermath of the Tiananmen killings

in 1989. Mosher is at his best in documenting—in what must be embarrassing detail for many U.S. sinologists and journalists—the height of the China craze in the years before and after President Nixon journeyed to China in 1972 to establish formal ties with the People's Republic.

It was during that period that I eagerly canvassed several leading U.S. sinologists for their advice, insight, and reading lists as I prepared for my new posting as a newspaper correspondent in Beijing. Do not judge China by Western values, I was repeatedly advised. Start with the premise that, given China's history and the problems it faces, communism is quite acceptable to the Chinese people.

Much of this anti-ethnocentrism run amok reflected the views of John King Fairbank, the dean of U.S. sinologists, whose impact on how Americans viewed China was at its peak. Mosher quotes Fairbank writing in 1972, several years after we began learning of the horrors of the Cultural Revolution, that the "Maoist revolution is on the whole the best thing that happened to the Chinese people in centuries." The people themselves seemed "healthy, well fed and articulate about their role as citizens of Chairman Mao's New China." This was the accepted, mainstream U.S. view of China in the early 1970s; it emanated from Fairbank at Harvard and was promulgated by academics and journalists, many of them his former students.

Unsurprisingly, the book lists I was given then were heavily weighted in favor of authors who were either sympathetic toward, or outright propagandists for, the revolution. U.S. sinologists had little good to say about the more sober and enlightening accounts of the Chinese revolution by their French counterparts. And they dismissed as right-wing pamphleteers Miriam and Ivan London, whose refugee-based accounts of the dark drama unfolding in China in the 1960s and 1970s are given appropriate credit by Mosher as among the most accurate and informative of that era.

Mosher shows how facts that don't fit